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insects, and to roam on this earth: but this idea of transmigration of souls has been probably borrowed from the Hindus. Rivet writes that although the ideas of a Godhead are not clearly grasped, yet a supreme creator is acknowledged, and that the following is the tradition relating to the creation of man. "God in the beginning having created man, placed him on the earth, but on returning to look at him, found he had been destroyed by the evil spirit. This happened a second time, whereupon the Deity created first a dog, then a man; and the dog, who kept watch, prevented the devil from destroying the man, and the work of the Deity was thus preserved." The Khasis, apparently, do not believe in punishment after death, at least there is no idea of hell, although the spirits of those who have died under the ban of *eaw* remain uneasy, being obliged to wander about the earth in different forms, as noted above. The spirits worshipped by the Khasis are many in number, those of the Syntengs being specially numerous. The particular spirit to be propitiated is ascertained by *ryp-lewkeng*. The offering acceptable to the spirit is similarly ascertained and is then made. If the particular sacrifice does not produce the result desired, a fowl is sacrificed; the entrails being then examined, an augury is drawn, and the sacrifice begins afresh. As the powers of *ryp-lewkeng* is believed to be peculiar to the Khasis amongst the Assam hill tribes, a separate description of it is given in the Appendix. It should be remarked that the Khasis never symbolise their gods by means of images, their worship being offered to the spirit only. The following are some of the principal spirits worshipped by the Khasis and Syntengs, omitting the spirits of deceased ancestors such as *Ka Iawbei*, a *Thaolang*, and a *Soidulia*, which will be described under the heading of ancestor-worship.

U Ri sulut—the god of the State, who is propitiated yearly by the sacrifice of a goat and a cock.

U Ri wattang—the god of water, used for drinking and cooking purposes. This god is similarly propitiated once a year, so that the water supply may remain pure.

* Sir Charles Lyall has pointed out that the Mikirs possess this custom; it is probably borrowed from the Khasis.

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restored by the due propitiation of the offended spirits. In order to ascertain which is the offended spirit, a system of divination by means of cowries, breaking eggs, or examining the entrails of animals and birds, was instituted. The Khasi method of obtaining auguries by examining the viscera of animals and birds may be compared with that of the Roman *haruspex*. Some description of these modes of divination has been given at the end of this chapter. The Khasi religion has been described by Bivar as "demon worship, or a jumble of enchantments muttered by priests who are conjurers." But even a religion which is thus unflatteringly described is based on the cardinal doctrines of sin and sacrifice for sin. Tradition amongst the Khasis states that in the beginning (*u pyrsyngkong ka sngi*) there was no sin, heaven and earth were near each other, and man had direct intercourse with God. How man fell into sin is not stated, but it is certain that he did fall. Experts at "egg healing" never forget to repeat the formula "*ngan briéw ngan ka pap*" (I man have sinned). The cock then appears as a mediator between God and man. The cock is styled "*u khún ka blei who kit syndang ka shah syndang na ka kyrta jong ngan u briéw*," i.e. the son of god who lays down his neck (life) for me man. The use of the feminine *ka blei* is no doubt due to matriarchal influences. There is another prayer in which the Khasis say, "*ap jutang ne u blei iong ranglah ne u briéw*" (oh god do not forget the covenant, arise oh man). The idea is that man has fallen into sin of omission and commission (*ka pap, ka lait ka lut*) but that God is nevertheless expected to spare him, and to accept a substitute for him according to the covenant (*jutang*). By this covenant God is supposed to have accepted in exchange the cock as a substitute for man. How the cock came to occupy such an important position, tradition is vague and self-conflicting. The fact remains that the covenant of the cock is the foundation of the Khasi religion. It is of interest to mention that amongst the Abors the tradition is that Khunlung and Khunlii brought down from heaven the *kiri-chin-mang*,* a pair of heavenly fowls, and that to this day the sacrifice of the

* In Abor *kiri* is fowl, *chin* is beautiful, *mang* is country. Therefore *Kiri-chin-mang* is fowl of a beautiful country (heaven).

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receptacle. A small basket (*ka shong*) is hung up over the head of the corpse, the basket containing pieces (*dykhot*) of the sacrificed animals. A dish containing eatables, and betel-nut, and a jar of water are placed near the head of the corpse by way of offering refreshment to the spirit of the departed. The food is given each morning and evening that the corpse remains in the house; this is called *ái ja mát ja stap*. Each night the corpse remains in the house guns are fired, drums are beaten and flutes (*shiráti*) are played. It is a noteworthy custom that the body is not retained in the house for an even number of nights, the usual time being three nights. If it is intended to burn the body on a masonry pyre (*jingthang*), a bull (*u sasi kynroh*) is sacrificed. If the body is placed in a coffin (*ka skyngoid*), a pig named *u'siang skyngoid* is sacrificed, and if it is intended to adorn the pyre with flags, a fowl called *u'iar kait* is sacrificed. On the day of the funeral procession pigs are sacrificed by the relatives and friends of the deceased; those who cannot afford pigs bring liquor (*ka'iad sóng*), a small portion of which they pour on the funeral pyre. The coffin is laid on a bamboo bier (*ka kreng*), money being placed close to the corpse, so that the spirit of the deceased may possess the wherewithal to buy food on its journey. Cotton, or, in the case of the rich, silk cloths are tied cross-ways over the bier, if the deceased is a male, and in the form of a parallelogram, if it is a female. Before lifting the bier a handful of rice and water from a jar are thrown outside, and a goat (*u'lang sait kwaid*) is sacrificed. These are purificatory ceremonies. The funeral procession then forms up and slowly passes along the way to the plaintive music of flutes (*shawfi*) and the beating of drums. At intervals, in the case of the rich, salutes from guns are fired. Copper coins are also scattered along the route. On nearing the pyre the dead body is exposed to view, and the pieces of flesh of the sacrificial animals, which are with the corpse, are thrown away. They make ready three baked loaves (*ki kpo*), an egg, the lower jaw-bones of the animals which have been sacrificed, the left leg of the fowl (*u'iar kwad kynti*), a jar of water, eatables in a dish, and a bow and three arrows. A goat is then sacrificed, *u'lang máwbjat*. The corpse is laid on the pyre, inside the coffin, if one is used, with the head to the west and the feet to the east. Logs of

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If any stream has to be crossed, a rough bridge is made of branches and grass. This trail of leaves and the bridges are intended to guide the spirit of the deceased to the cairn. The person who carries the bones is not allowed to turn round, or to the right, or to the left, but must proceed straight to the cairn. On reaching it, a *nongknia*, or sacrificer, washes the bones three times and then places them in an earthen pot, tying up the mouth with a white cloth. Then, having taken three pieces of the hard yolk of an egg, three loaves of bread, the leg of the fowl, "*u'iar krad lynti*," and the lower jaw-bones of the animals which have been sacrificed, he places them inside the cairn and shuts the door. Eatables and betel-nut are then placed on the top of the cairn. Early next morning the relatives and friends go to the cairn with fresh food and water, and look about for new foot-prints, the idea being that from these foot-prints they can foretell future events. This they do until the third night after the cremation. During these three nights the front door of the house formerly occupied by the deceased is never closed, it being thought that the spirit may wish to return and visit its earthly abode. The whole family is moreover *sang*, or taboo, during this period, and no manner of work can be done. When the three nights are over, it is called the *lait ia*, i.e. the days (of mourning) are passed, and three eggs are broken to ascertain what was the cause of the death. After this the family goes to bathe, and the clothes and mats in the house are washed. When this has been done, the taboo is removed and the family can go to work. After a month a pig or a fowl is sacrificed, the ceremony being called "*ai bam lait baai*." It will be observed that *three* seems to be the lucky number throughout these funeral ceremonies. The number seems to bear a similar significance in other matters of Khasi ritual, e.g. the pouring out of libations, which is always done three times.

It is *sang* or taboo for a Khasi widow to re-marry within one year from the death of her husband, there is a similar prohibition for a husband re-marrying; but such *sang* can be got over by the payment of a fine to the clan of the deceased. After the expiration of one year the fine is reduced in amount. Khasi widows do not as a rule re-marry, according to U Jeebon Roy,

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764 bones, a ceremony called "*Beh-tympew*" is performed, which consists of driving out the devils from the house, so that they may not interf with the peace of the spirits of the departed whilst they rest in the house, and on their journey to the tomb. All the men after they have performed this ceremony are given [273] a drink of rice-beer known as *'iad nonglieh*. Another cock is sacrificed, and a small bamboo ladder of three rungs is prepared for the use of the spirits when climbing into the tomb. Rice is then thrown outside the door. The next morning they perform further sacrifices, which need not be detailed here, and let loose [783] a bull whose horns have been cased in silver. They dig two shallow tanks called *umkoi*, into which is poured water supposed [766] to possess the virtue of purifying the bones of any deceased clansmen who have died violent or unnatural deaths, or at places far away from their homes, where it was not possible to perform their funeral ceremonies according to custom. Three vertical stones are also erected, called *maw umkoi*. A bamboo with a white flag, and a plantain tree are set up; to the bamboo are attached three bamboo rings (*kyrwoh*), which are supposed to act as summonses to the spirits of the departed who have not received the benefits of a proper funeral ceremony. It may be explained that this ring of bamboo or cane is the form of summons used by the Khasi chiefs to their subjects when they wish to call them before them. Then a cock, *u'iar umkoi*, is sacrificed as a vicarious victim to bear the sins of the departed. When the procession reaches the *mawkjat* or *mawlynti* (the upright stones which have been erected), a goat called *u'lang mawlynti* is sacrificed. Then a bamboo is fixed to the centre one of the three upright stones, to which is attached the lower jaw-bone of one of the cattle sacrificed in the puja-house; this is called *u masi mawlynti*. A special ceremony called *ka-lyngka-pongrei* [764] is then performed for those of the clan who have died childless. We now come to the actual ceremony of placing the bones in the tomb of the clan. Having arrived at the tomb, the bones are washed three times in a dish (this is a Cherra custom). In Mawshai, the bones are exposed to the heat of a fire kindled on a small *jingthang*, or burning-platform. The stone door of the *cinerarium* is then opened, and the bones of the females are placed in an earthen pot inside the tomb

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and that the latter were originally used by both of them for sacrificing human victims. Sometimes, immediately on either side of the *mawkni*, or large central stone, there are two much smaller stones called *mawksing*, or the stone of the drum, and *mawkait*, the stone of the plantain; the drum being used in all religious ceremonies by the Khasis, and the plantain relating to their custom of feeding young children on plantains. The *mawnam* must be described separately from the *mawbynna*, because they differ from them in an important particular, i.e. that the former may be erected to commemorate the father, while the latter are set up to perpetuate the memory of the ancestors on the female side of the family. *Mawnam* consist of three upright stones and one flat table-stone in front. The large central stone is called *u maw thawlang*, or the stone of the father, and the upright stones on either side are meant to represent the father's brothers or nephews. The flat table-stone is *ka Iawbei*, i.e. the grandmother of the father, not the first grandmother of the clan, as in the case of the *mawbynna*.

(*c*) The *maw umkoi* have already been described. They are erected to mark the sites of purificatory tanks, which have been dug so that the remains of deceased persons may be cleansed from the impurities attending an unnatural death, and to counteract the adverse influence upon the clan of *Ka Tyrut*, or the goddess of death. These stones are sometimes called *mawtyrut*.

(*d*) *Maw-shongthait*, or stones upon which weary travellers sit, are to be found alongside all the principal lines of communication in the district. It may serve as an example of these stones to describe the very interesting collection of stones at Nartiang *hát*, or market. A reference is invited to the plate which gives a representation of some of the Nartiang stones. The great height of the upright stone will at once be seen; it is 27 ft. in height and 2½ ft. thick. This stone is the largest erect stone in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills at the present day, and is a very fine specimen. The upright stones and the flat table-stones at Nartiang are called "*ki maw jong Siem*." There is no separate designation for each of them. These stones are popularly supposed to have been erected long ago by two men,

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GENNA.

784 The word *genna* is one in common use amongst the Naga tribes. It seems to be a matter of doubt whether the word belongs to any of the numerous languages or dialects spoken by these tribes; but for our purposes it may be taken to mean *taboo*. The Khasi word *sang*, which implies an interdiction either religious or social from doing any particular thing, might have been employed; but as the word *genna* is so commonly used when speaking of taboos amongst the hill tribes of this province, I have thought fit to employ it here. The word *genna*, or taboo, may be held to include the Khasi *sang*. Taboos amongst the Khasis, Wárs and Lynngams may be divided into
784 two sections; (*a*) general, and (*b*) special. Instances of general
609 taboo have not been found amongst the Khasis, but the follow-
688 ing taboo called *Ka sang kla* amongst the Wár villages of Sohbar and Nongjri is peculiar, and therefore worthy of description. Its chief peculiarity is that during the time the *sang kla* continues, the inhabitants of these two villages are not allowed to associate with foreigners. This *genna* takes place twice a year, in the months of June and November, and lasts for a month each time. During the *genna* foreigners are not allowed to stay the night in these two villages, and the villagers must not sleep the night outside their villages. If they do not return home for the night, they are subjected to a fine. There is a prohibition against eating, smoking, or chewing betel-nut with foreigners
784 during the period. The above is the only instance of general
609 taboo that I have been able to find amongst the Wárs, but in
582 the Lynngam villages there is a taboo on all outsiders at the time of the village pujas. Such a taboo amongst the Lynngams is not to be wondered at, as they have probably imbibed the notion from their Garo mothers, intermarriages between Lynngams and Garos being common. The Garos, like other Thibeto-Burmans, have numerous taboos. There are numerous
582 instances of special taboos among the Khasis. *Kaba*
784 *khong sang*, or marrying within the *kur* or clan, is the
783 most important taboo of all, and is regarded as the most
764 serious offence a Khasi can commit. It admits of no expiation, and the bones and ashes of the offender cannot be placed in the family tomb.

764
782 sacrifice pigs, bring liquor, some of which they pour out on the funeral pyre. The coffin is raised onto a bamboo bier, and some money is placed next to the body so that the spirit of the deceased can buy food on the journey. Cotton or (in the case of rich people) silk cloths are wound around the coffin, crosswise if the deceased is a man, in the form of a square if the deceased is a woman. Before the bier is [783] raised up, one throws a handful of rice and pours a little water from a jug in front of the door and sacrifices a goat. These are purification ceremonies. The funeral procession is now arranged and slowly wends its way accompanied by a great deal of music. For rich people guns are shot off in between times. Copper coins are also strewn along the way. As the funeral pyre is approached, the corpse is placed on display and the peices of meat of the sacrificed animals which lay beside the body are thrown away. Then one arranges three loaves of baked bread, an egg, the lower jawbones of the animals which were sacrificed, the left [435] foot of the rooster (u 'iar krad lynti), a jug of water, food in a dish, and three arrows. A goat is now sacrificed. The body of the deceased is placed in the coffin, if one is used, and then lifted up on the pile of wood, with the head towards the west and the feet towards the east. Pieces of wood are now placed around the corpse, and the egg ("stomach egg") is broken, not as is often supposed over the stomach of the deceased but rather it is thrown on the pile of wood in the direction of the feet. The fire is now lighted by the kur or member of the clan and then by the children, if there are any. Another rooster (u 'iar padat) is sacrificed, the blood

776 off and he was let go with the mark of Cain.

b) Liberation from the Thlen.

776 It also happens that people who revered a
782 thlen and sacrificed to it wish to free themselves
• 783 from its power and sever all connections with it. This is called pyndud noh ia u thlen, which means throwing away, exposing the thlen. However this is connected with a great sacrifice for the family concerned. [228] To get free of the thlen, there is no other way than to give up all their possessions. House and contents must be burned down; money and objects of value of all kinds thrown away and even the household animals must be given up. This takes place with the observance of a certain ceremony which is performed by the lyngdoh of a village with the participation of men designated by the S'iem (Khasi king). The sacrificer (lyngdoh) first asks the oracle about the place, mountains, etc., where the thlen goods should be taken. When that is found out, the ones who were the thlen owners go with the lyngdoh and the men named, as well as with a crowd of spectators to the place that has been determined upon. All the movable goods, including clothes, that belong to the ones who wish to be free, are brought here. The lyngdoh speaks an oath and then commands the thlen owners, who have been deprived of all their property down to their naked skins, to return to the village directly without looking around. Then the rest of the spectators leave. This occurs during the night. It is the superstition of the people that the devil snake is inwardly joined with property and follows it. Whoever should appropriate it therefore would also be in the power of the devil snake. The snake would climb on him as the expression says (kiu u thlen ha ki).
[devil snake; see category 46, pp 28ff.. Analyst]

776 Therefore nobody dares to appropriate the ob-
782 jects that have been thrown away or even to touch
• 783 them. Only into the house of the S'iem and into the whole royal family can no entrance be found by the thlen, and therefore some valuable things may be given to the Khasi king. This may be connected with the fact that usually on the next morning after the above ceremony nothing more is to be found of the objects that were given away. Therefore it rarely happened in former times that anyone kept a found object from fear that it might be thlen property and he might bring the thlen devil into his house with it. But if they did take an object they found, a piece of money or such, home with them, the oracle was first asked by egg throwing whether it contained any evil, and only when this was denied and the real owner could not be found did they keep a part of it; the rest had to be used for sacrificial purposes.

The immovable property is treated the same way as the movable property. Fields which the family formerly possessed lie fallow; nobody dares to take them over or to plant anything on them.
[476] But the whole village hastens to help the former thlen owners who have lost all their property. They are given clothes and rice and helped in building a hut so that they can begin an honest life again.

c) Story of a Former Thlen Worshipper.

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593 How is all this known about the thlen, many ask, if the owners try to hide their secret? An indirect answer is already given by the whole previous presentation. Then it also happens, for example, that men marry into the house of a woman who is a thlen owner. Certainly this is not always known beforehand, although real thlen

1 [devil snake; see Cat 116, pp 28 ff. --Analyst]

776 owners can only conceal this for any length of
593 time with difficulty. Now when the woman gathers the members of her household and the unsuspecting man together for the thlen sacrifice, this man dashes out from fright and tells the horrible things that he has seen. He never returns to his wife by whom he was deceived by the concealment of such an important condition and he seeks another wife.

776 [229] The accounts of previous thlen owners
682 finally give further information. I will only
783 introduce one case as it was told by one of these. I am indebted for this to the kindness of the missionary in Cherrapunji, P. Corbinian Bonheim S.D.S. who has been there many years and to whom a former thlen owner related his experiences. This he translated into our language as follows:

"Formerly we were very poor people. Then one day we found a wonderfully beautiful smooth stone on the mountain when we were chopping wood, and we brought it home and preserved it. From this time on we had good luck everywhere; every undertaking succeeded, we never had losses and our fortune increased from day to day and even at gambling we never lost. Gradually we became rich people. Thus matters continued for four or five years. Then I had a strange dream. A woman appeared to me who said to me: "Look, I have given you such great wealth, now I also demand a sacrifice of you. You should sacrifice a lang thoh khlih to me, i.e., a goat with a spotted head." The next morning I told my dream to the members of the household, and they thought that she was the goddess who was demanding the sacrifice owing to her. So we sacrificed a goat. But soon after I had a dream again and the same voice as before spoke to me again: "I have demanded ka lang thoh khlih of you and you only gave me a goat. The goat, however, that I demand,

776 is human blood ka snam briu!" The next morning
682 I told my dream again and all my relatives were
783 frightened, for they knew now that it was the thlen devil and not the goddess who made them rich. But now we had to decide what we would do: give up all our wealth and possession or fulfill the will of the thlen. We decided to do the latter. But we let week after week go by until the thlen began to threaten that he would consume our whole house. Now we went, my brother and I out stalking to see if we could murder someone. We saw a woman from our village go alone to the forest to gather wood. We crept after her and when we thought the moment was right we fell upon her with blows and beat her till she was dead. Immediately thereafter, however, we fled deeper into the forest with the intention of taking the blood from the slain woman somewhat later when we could do it undisturbed. But after a while the woman came to her senses and luckily escaped back to the village by a different way. When she arrived home she told what had happened and named the two of us brothers as her murderers. Her relatives went at once to the chief and accused us. When we now came out of our hiding place to get the blood from the woman who we supposed was dead, we found to our astonishment that she had disappeared. We hurried along the road to pursue her but we could not find her anywhere. When we came home we were told at once that a woman had luckily escaped from murderers, but that it was still questionable whether she would live. We, however, wished secretly that she would die. But the chieftain had commanded that the woman be cared for carefully. When she had so far recovered that she could come to a judicial meeting, the chieftain ordered all the inhabitants of the village to the gathering. Our hands and feet trembled, and stuttering we confessed our

776 guilt. The chieftain then said to us: "You
682 will pay the woman the entire cost of her care
• 783 and agree that I have your thlen driven out and that you give up your property; if you will do that, nothing more will be done to you. A hut where you can live temporarily, a cloth /230/ so that you can at least cover your honor, and rice which you need will be given you by the village until you can again save something. But if you do not wish to do that then a severe punishment will be meted out to you without mercy or pity." We submitted to the judgment of the chieftain. He then had all our possessions carried away and our house burned down to the ground. And when we had moved into the hut which was built for us by the inhabitants of the village at the command of the chieftain, lo, this wonderful stone was there. We reported this to the chieftain and he took counsel with his elders as to what should now be done. They came to the conclusion that at the time of the first exorcism the lyngdohs had not given us the command to go home directly without looking around. We had looked around and therefore the thlen had come to us again. Therefore the chieftain now commanded that the expulsion and exorcism and destruction should be undertaken again. This time we went straight home without looking around and so we were then free of the thlen. We have never seen the thlen itself." This much the report of the thlen worshipper.

682 The Position of the English-Indian Government
782 in Respect to these Human Sacrifices.

But is it possible, many will ask, that such crimes can occur in a British province of the Indian Empire? Why are such things not called to the attention of the English government and why